



The Geography of the Middle East

The Middle East Today



The Middle East vs. the U. S.

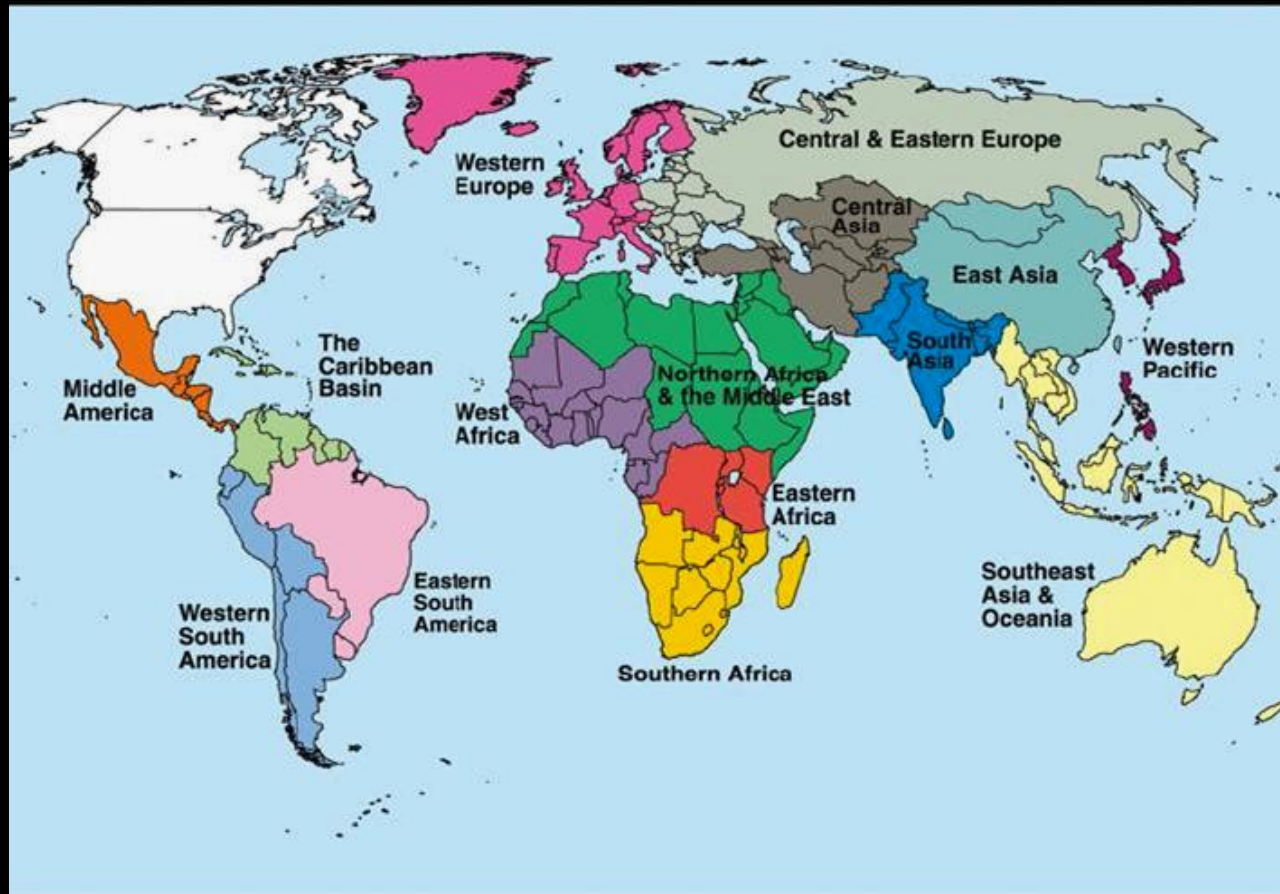
Latitude Lines



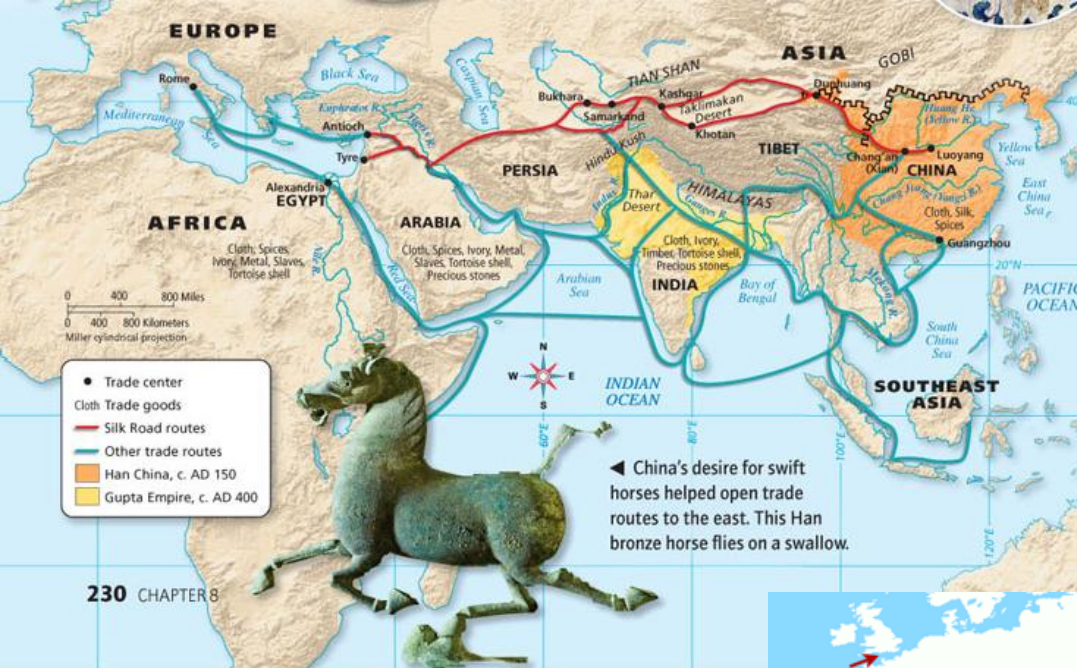


The Middle East is at the crossroads of three continents:
Africa, Asia and Europe

Middle East? OR Near East? OR Southwest Asia? OR....?



“Middle East” is a term invented by Europeans to describe the geographical region that lies between Europe and distant parts of Asia (what they called the far east). The “Middle East” is on the continent of Asia but many parts of North Africa have strong cultural and geographic ties with the Middle East.



Since ancient times the Middle East has connected major trade routes between Asia and Europe over land and seas. Caravans from India and China brought goods to the busy markets of the middle East. From there, traders carried the goods across the Mediterranean Sea into Europe. Others routes took traders across the Red Sea or down the coast of Africa.



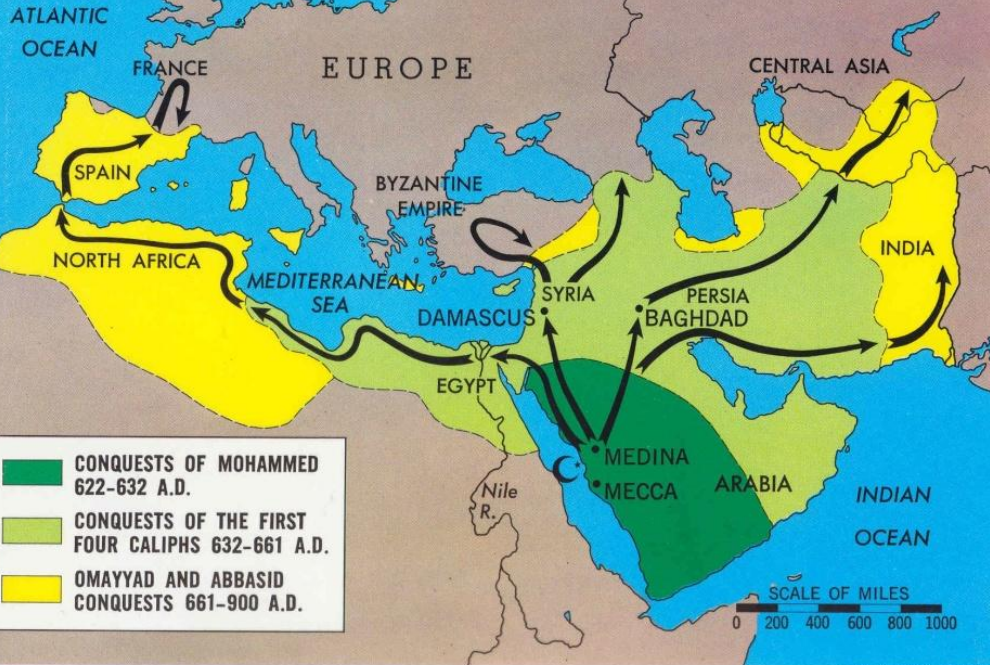
Migrating people, traders and conquerors spread ideas, religious traditions, inventions and achievements in Europe, Asia and Africa. The movement of customs or ideas from one place to another is called : **CULTURAL DIFFUSION**.



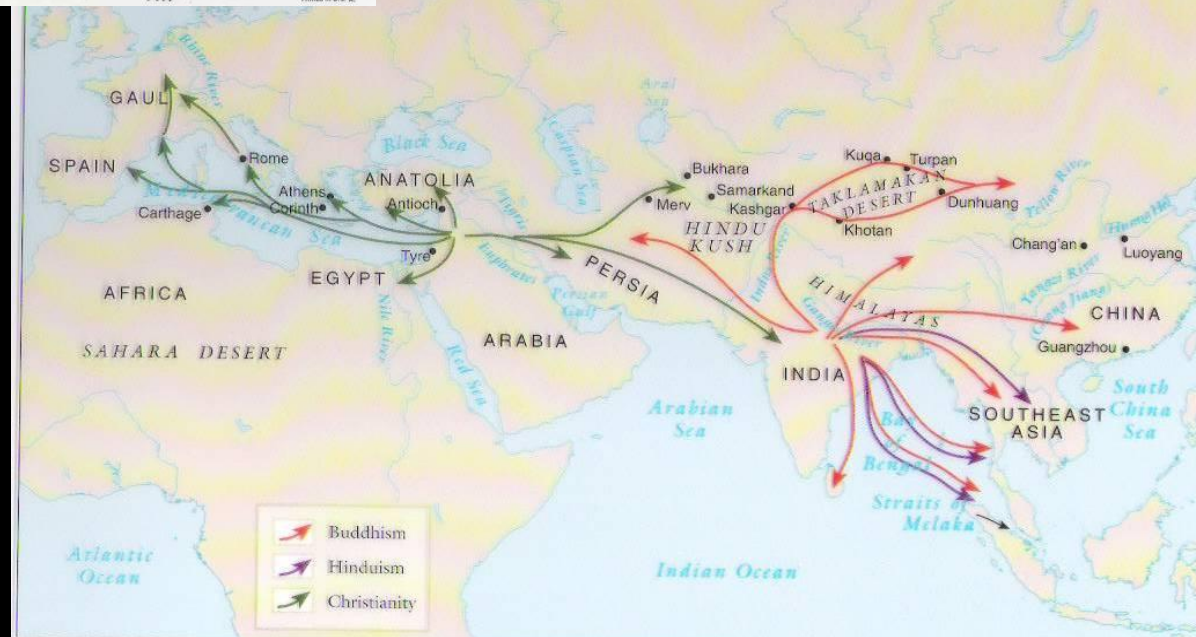
For Example:



THE SPREAD OF ISLAM 622-900 A.D.



CULTURAL DIFFUSION of religious ideas



The Middle East is home to many different peoples with a variety of languages, religions and traditions.

Arabs (people whose native language is Arabic) are the majority group in the Middle Eastern countries but the Middle East is also home to other groups such as Iranians, Turks, and Kurds.

Major Religions

Islam

Christianity

Judaism

Languages

Arabic - سلام

Turkish - **Bariş**

Hebrew - שלום

Kurdish - **Hasîti**, **hashiti**

Persian - **Solh Dari**



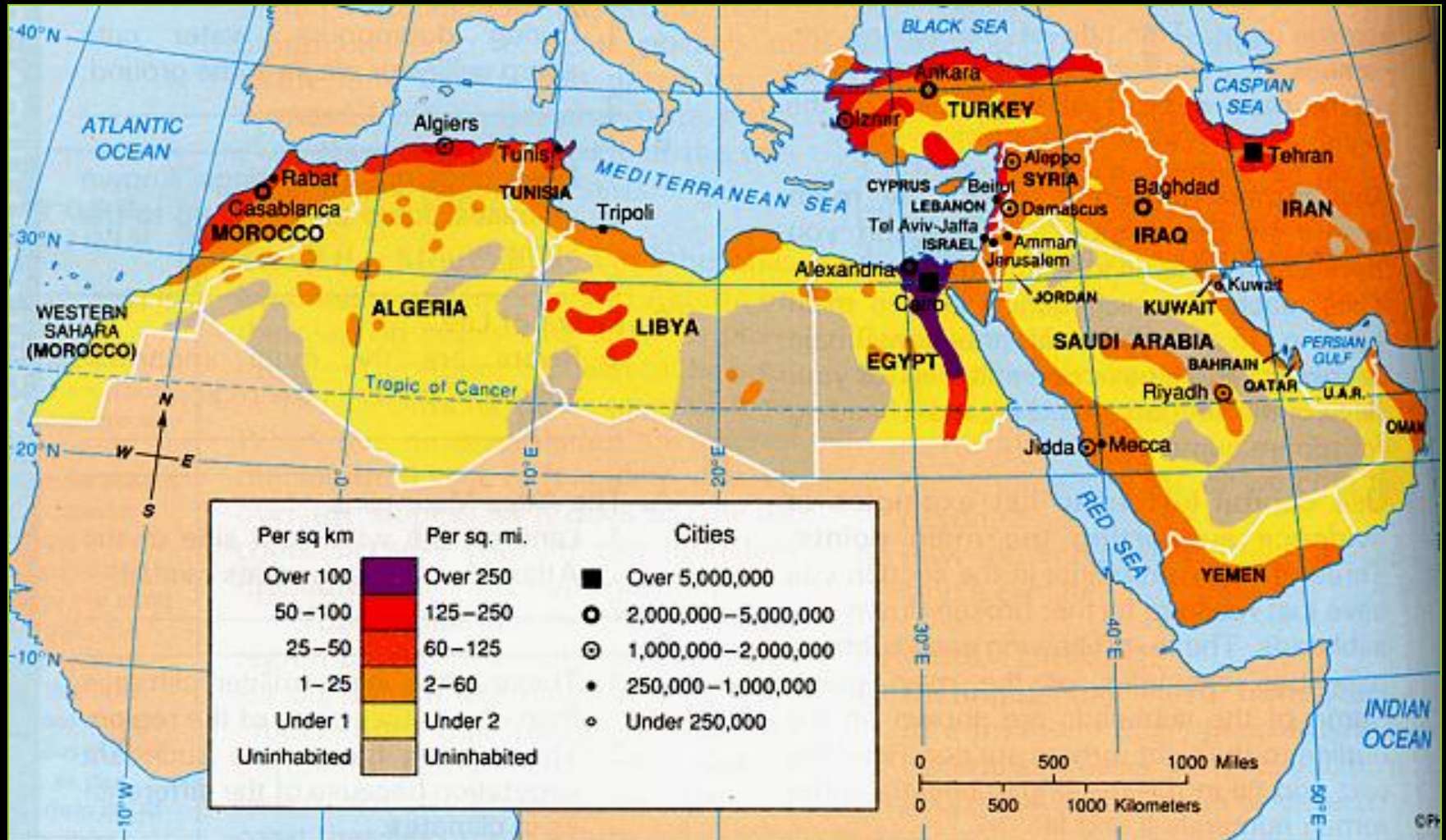
Desert Bedouins



A Bedouin is someone who was born and raised in the desert or mountain wilderness and lives in tents or caves. Bedouins raise goats, sheep, donkeys, horses and camels. Bedouins navigate and live with ease in the desert traveling in small bands (groups). The Bedouins live today as they have for thousands of years, traveling from one oasis to another. They use the resources in one area while the others are replenished naturally. The status of men and women is clearly different. Music, poetry, and dance are major parts of their culture.



Middle East: Population Density



Cairo, Egypt



**17,000,000+
People!**

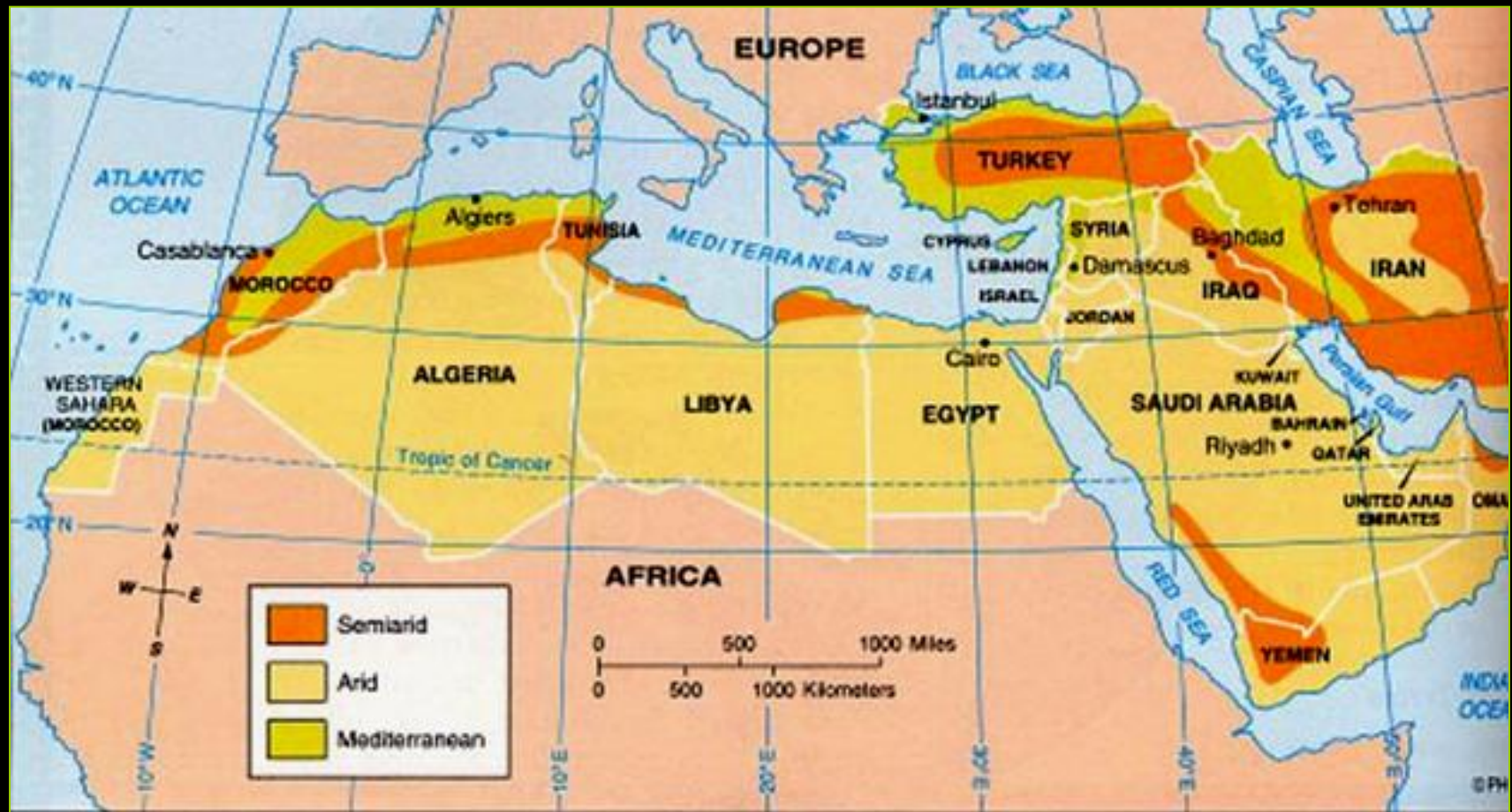




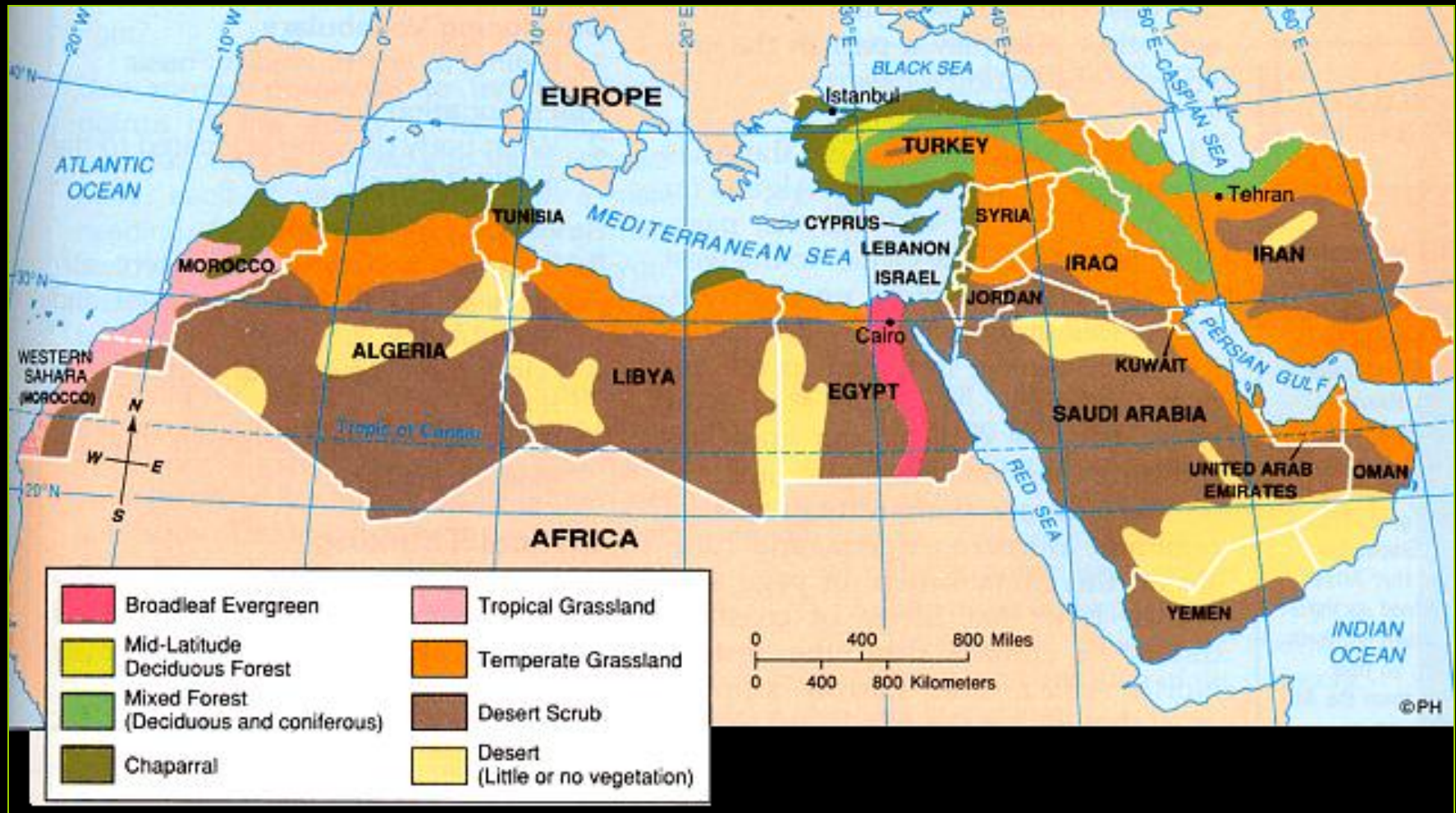
Tehran, Iran

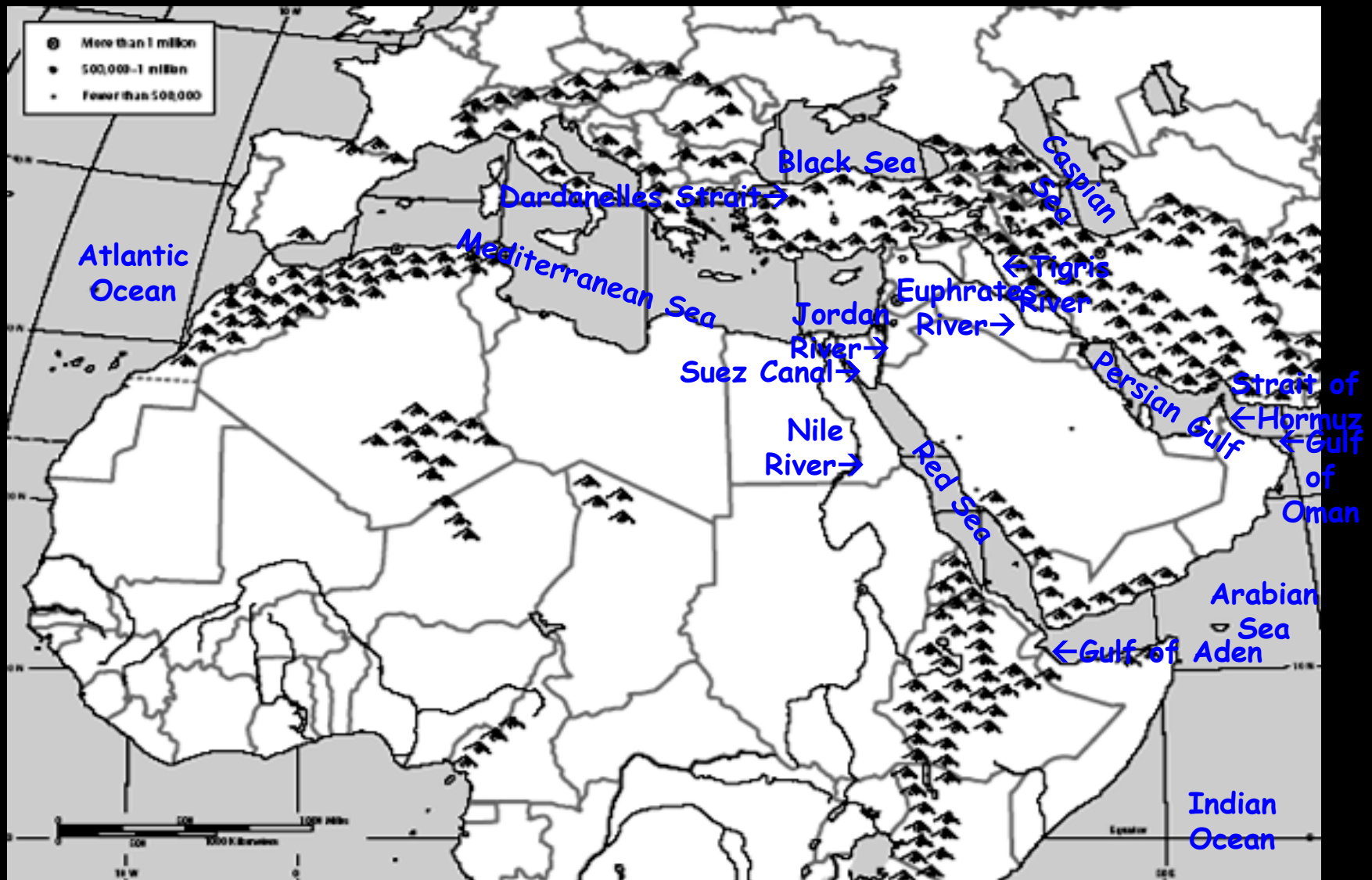


Middle East: Climate Regions



The Middle East: Natural Vegetation





The Middle East commands vital sea routes especially in regards to transportation of oil. It has “strategic importance” which means it is important to the world for military and economic reasons.

As the only passage to the ocean from many of the oil-producing states of the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz is a vastly important strategic waterway. Through its waters travel huge tankers loaded with oil from Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The Oil that flows through the Strait of Hormuz accounts for roughly 40% of the world's seaborne oil shipments, and 20% of all world shipments.



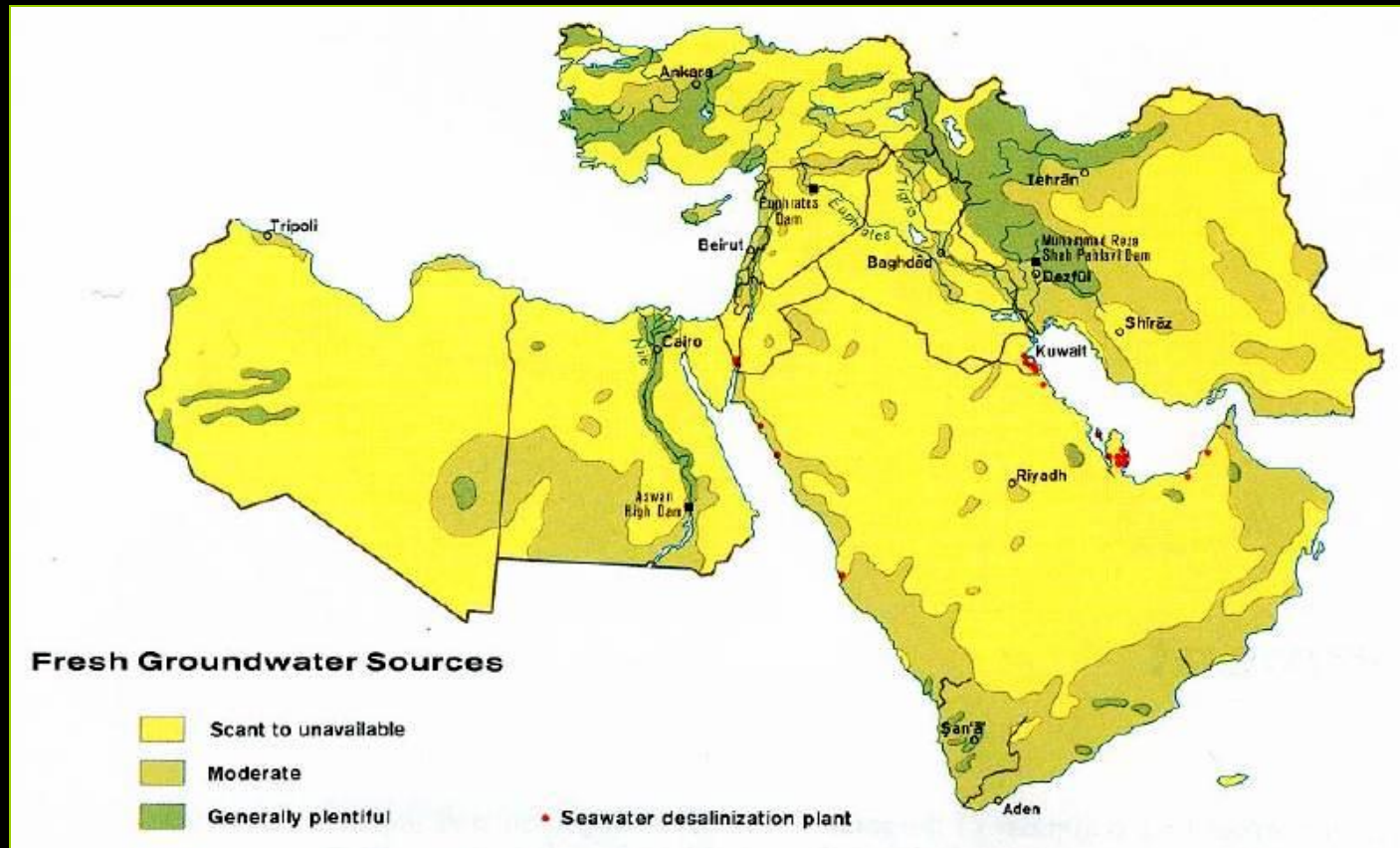
Egypt operates the Suez Canal which links the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea, creating a water route to the Indian Ocean.



Turkey controls the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles straits (also known as the Turkish straights) that link the Black and Aegean Seas.



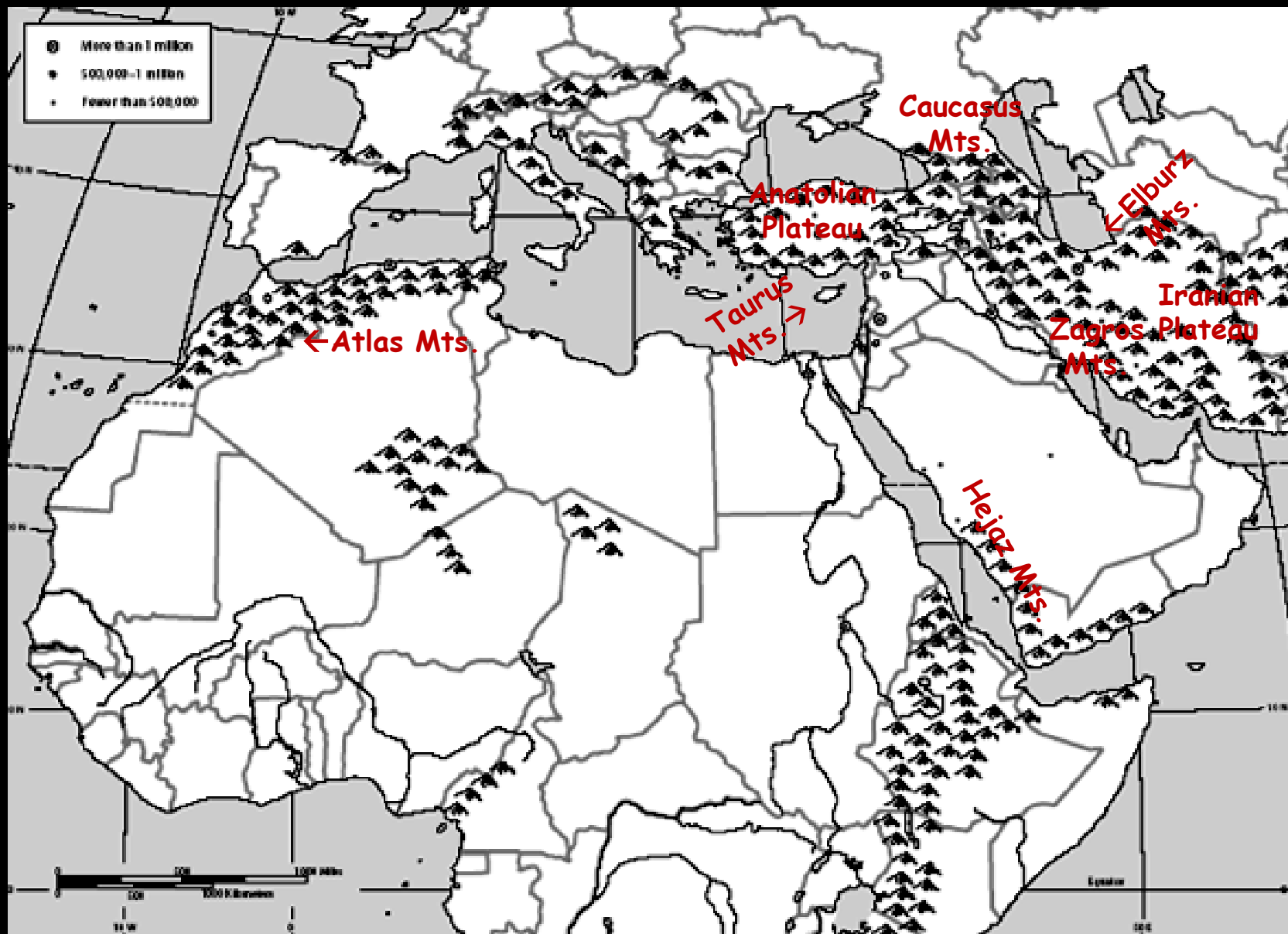
Climate has dictated where people live in the Middle East. Nearly all of the region is desert. People have clustered in well-water areas along the coasts and river valleys. Because of the scarcity of water, settlements were scattered and many separate nations developed.



Fresh Groundwater Sources

Groundwater is water beneath the earth's surface.

Mountains & Plateaus



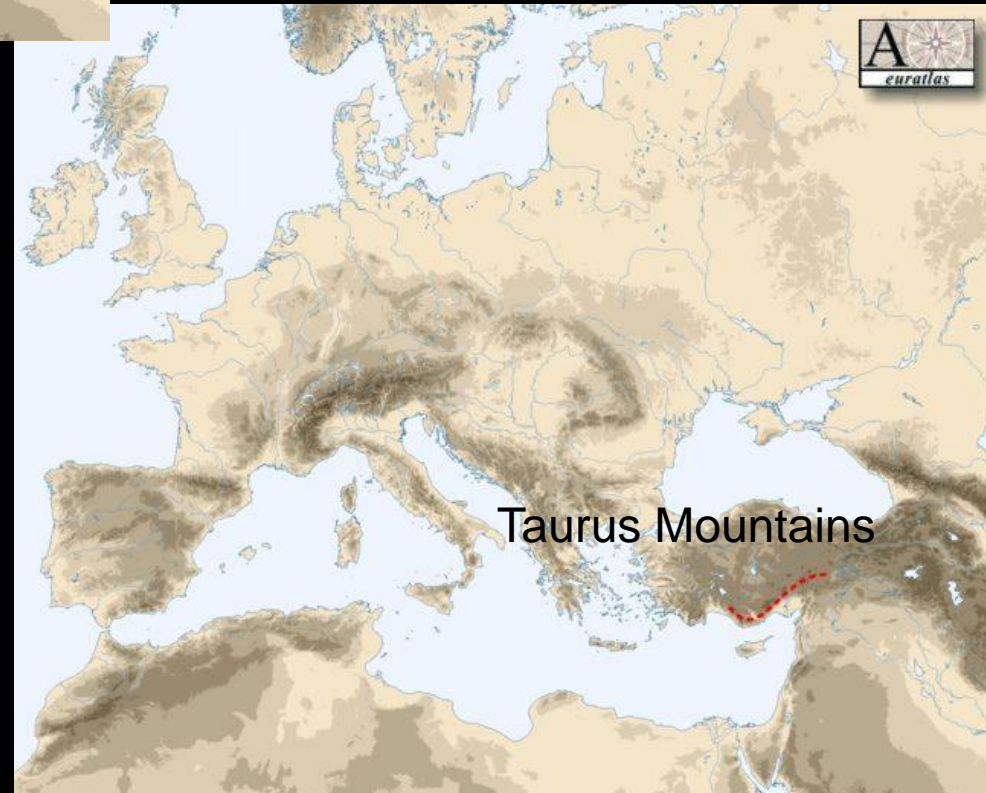
Regions - Northern Tier



The Northern Tier region consists of present-day Turkey and Iran. A region of mountains and plateaus (large area of high flat, or gently rolling land).



The Anatolian Plateau is a large peninsula that connects Asia and Europe. The Anatolian Plateau is ringed by the Pontic and Taurus mountains. Fertile soil means good farming and a large population.

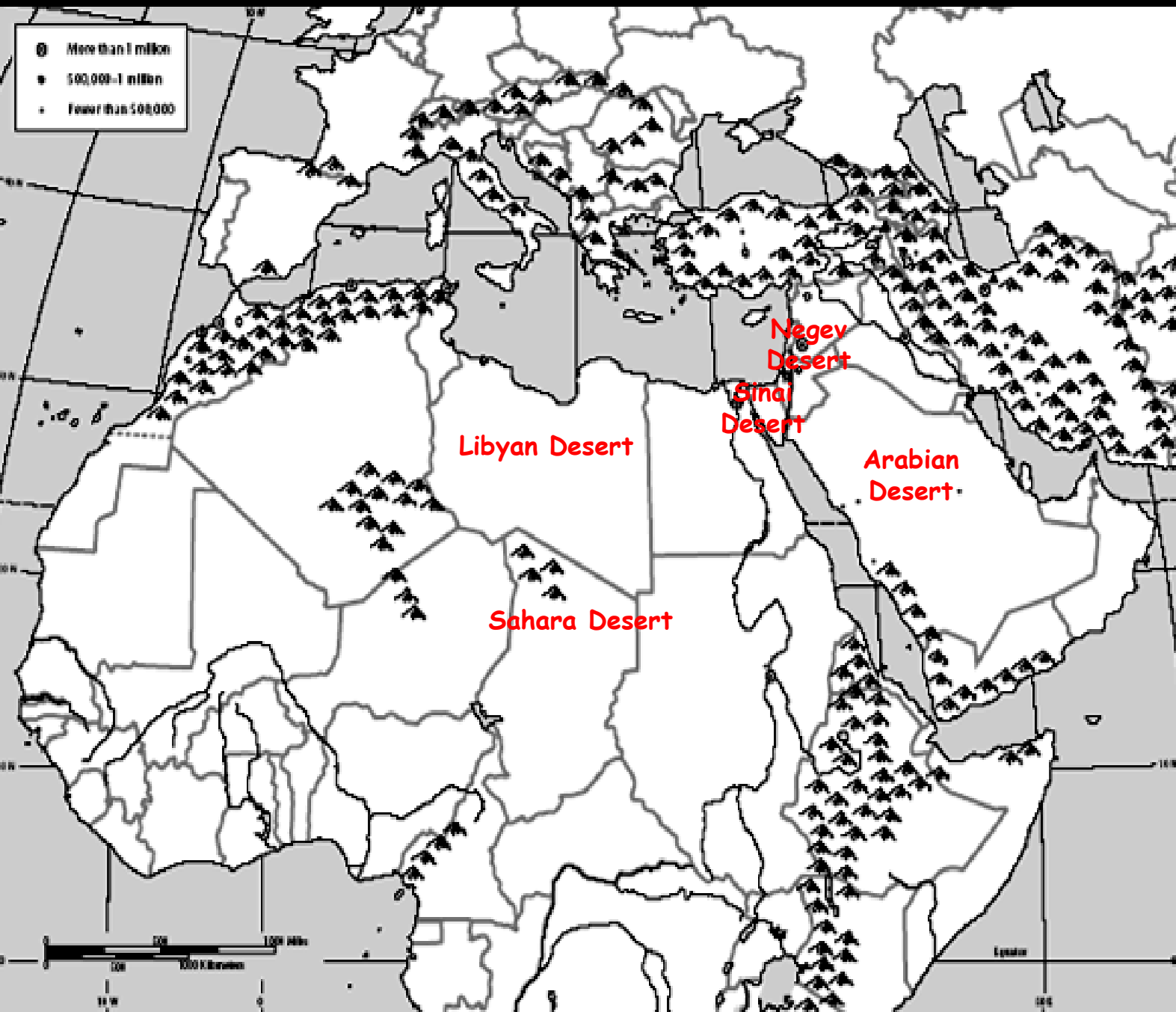


Regions – Iranian Plateau



The Iranian Plateau is surrounded by Elburz and Zagros mountains. Most of the region is dry and the population is small but many empires were founded in the Iranian Plateau. Throughout history, these empires controlled large parts of the middle east from this region.





Deserts

Less than 10% of Middle East land receives enough water to make farming possible.

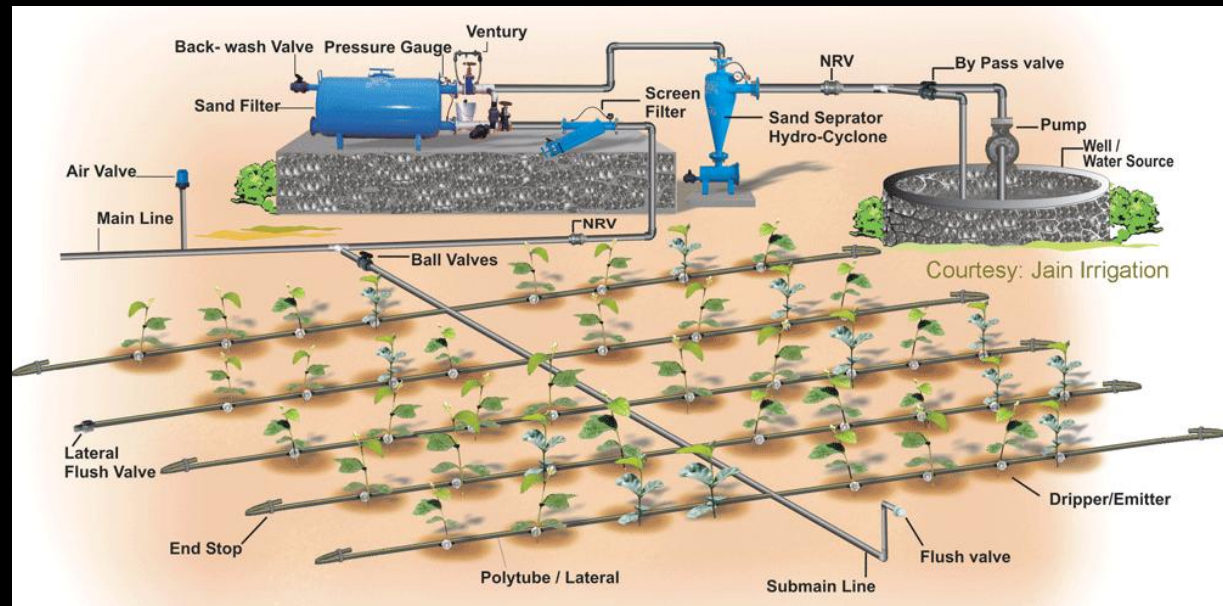
From earliest times, people built irrigation systems to carry water from rivers to crops. Ancient Egyptians used a shaduf. Modern technological methods include drip irrigation and desalination.



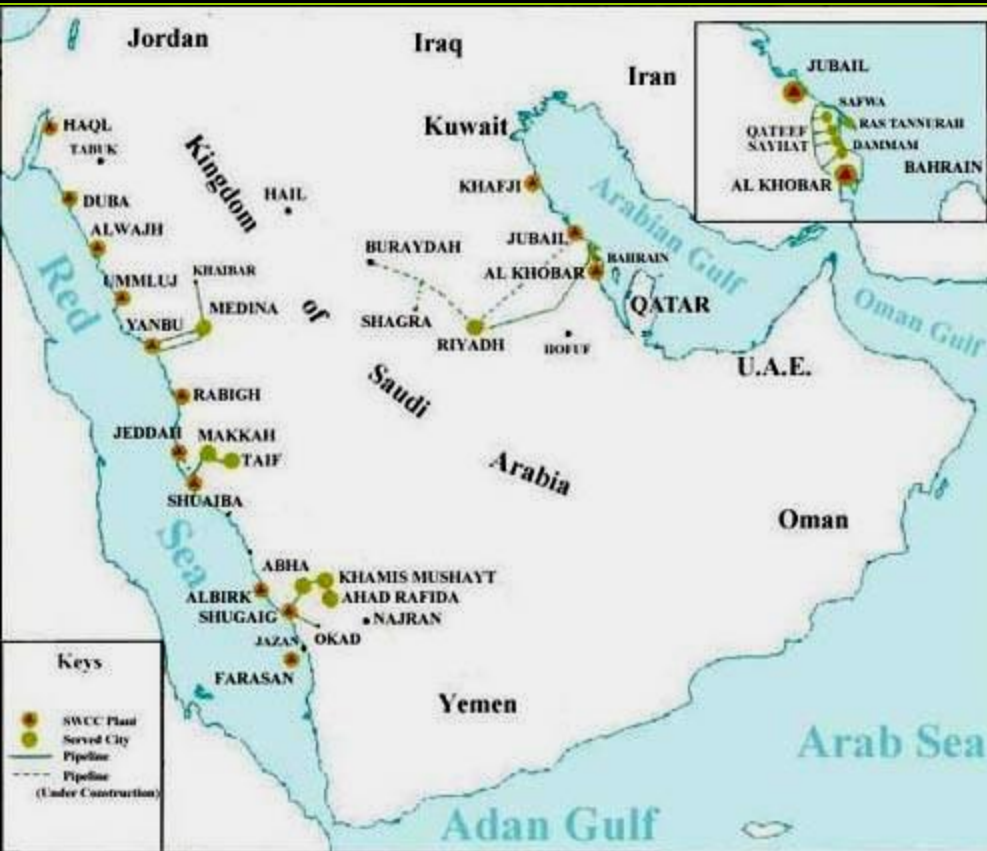
shaduf



drip irrigation



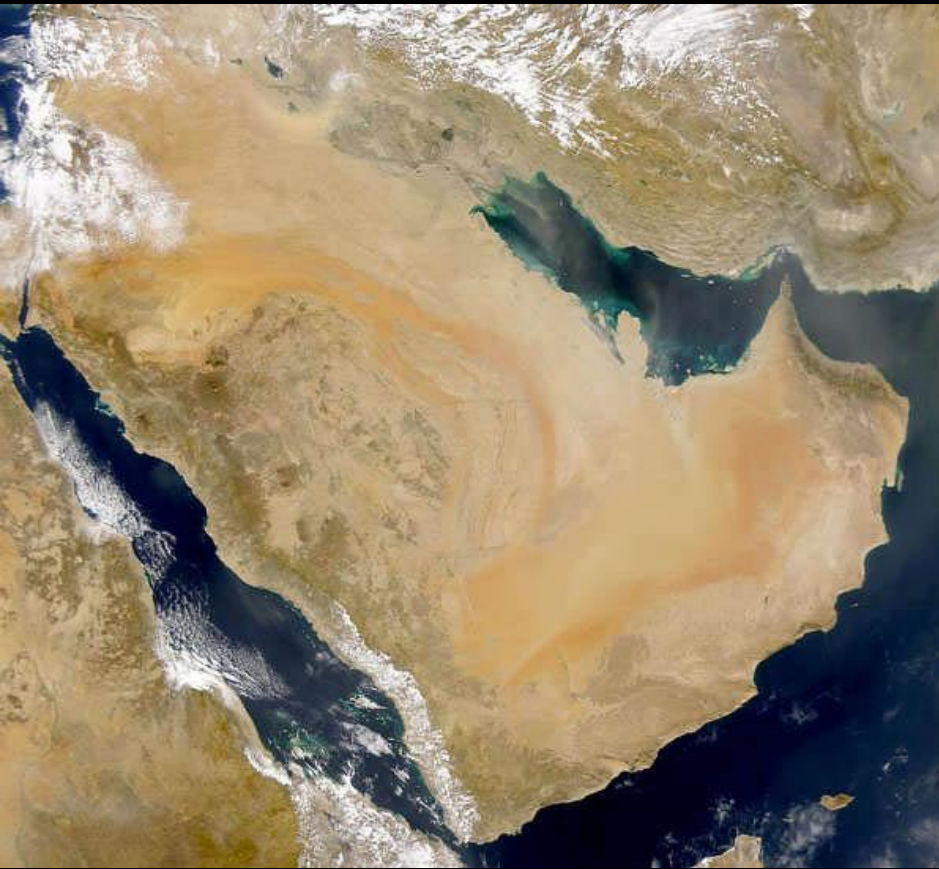
Desalinization Plants



Desalination is the process of removing salt and other minerals from water. This process converts sea water to water that is suitable for human consumption or irrigation.



Arabian Peninsula

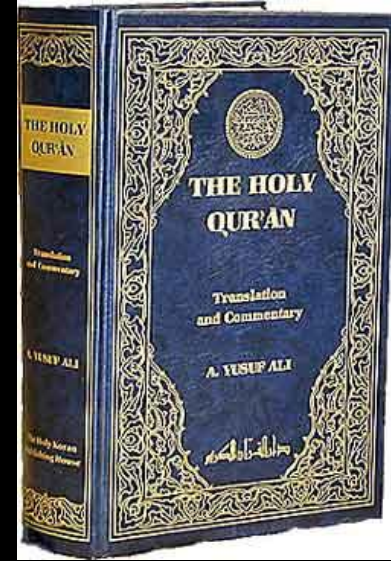


The Arabian Peninsula is a large plateau that is about 1/3 Size of the US. It borders several important bodies of water. The nation of Saudi Arabia is the largest country in the region.



Most of the Arabian peninsula is a desert and due to lack of water the population is very small. Most people live around oases. An oasis is a fertile area in the desert that has enough water to support plant and animal life.



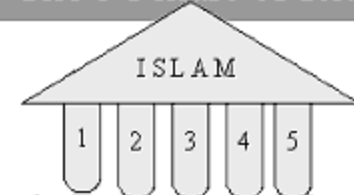


The Arabian Peninsula is the birthplace of Islam. Mohamed is the founder of Islam and the Quran is the holy book. The 5 most important obligations of a Muslim are called the 5 pillars of Islam.

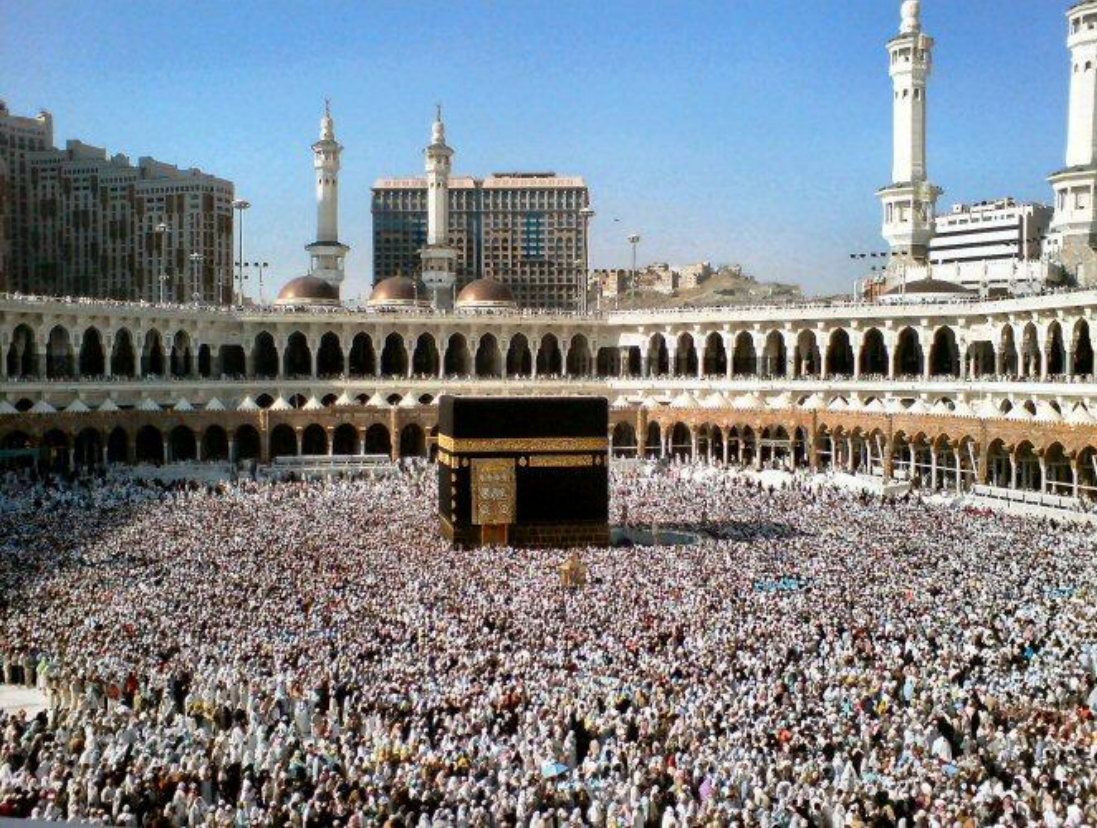
One of the pillars of Islam is to fast during Ramadan. The month of Ramadan is a time when Muslims concentrate on their faith and spend less time on the concerns of their everyday lives. It is a time of worship and contemplation. During the Fast of Ramadan strict restraints are placed on the daily lives of Muslims. They are not allowed to eat or drink during the daylight hours.

[http://Click here to see pictures of Ramadan](#)

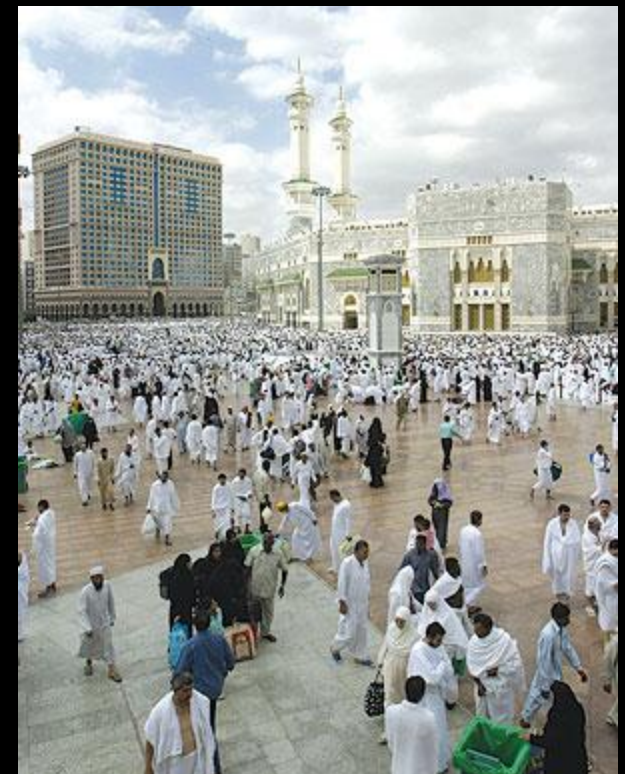
The 5 Pillars of Islam



1. **Shahada**- Testimony and declaration of faith
2. **Salah**- Prayer 5 times a day
3. **Zakat**- 2 1/2% charity to the poor
4. **Saum**- Fasting during the month of Ramadan
5. **Hajj**- Pilgrimage to Mecca at least once a lifetime



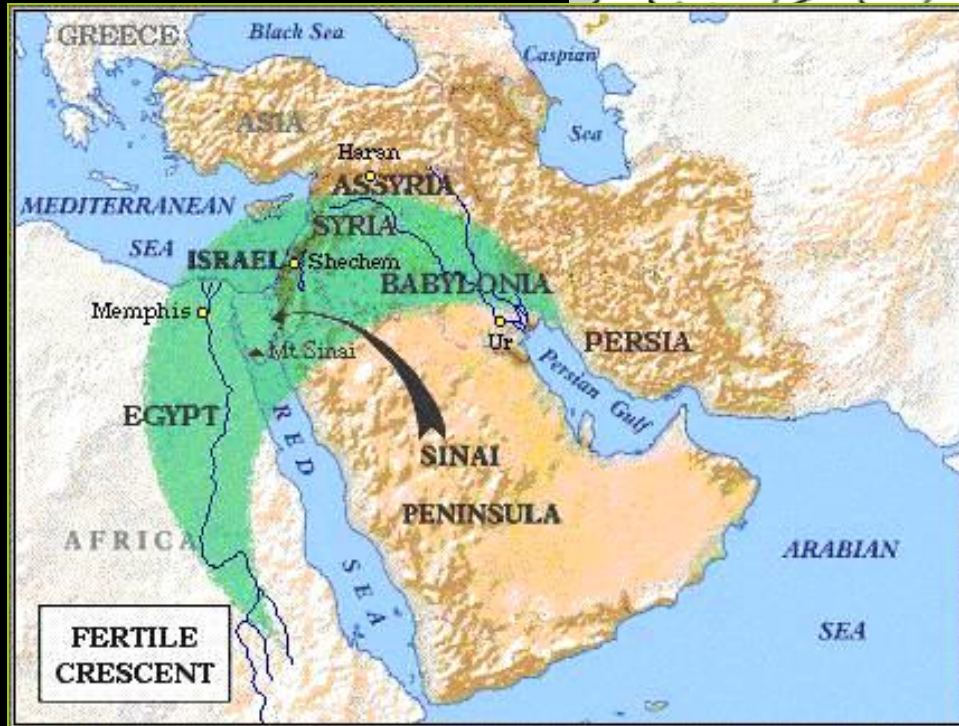
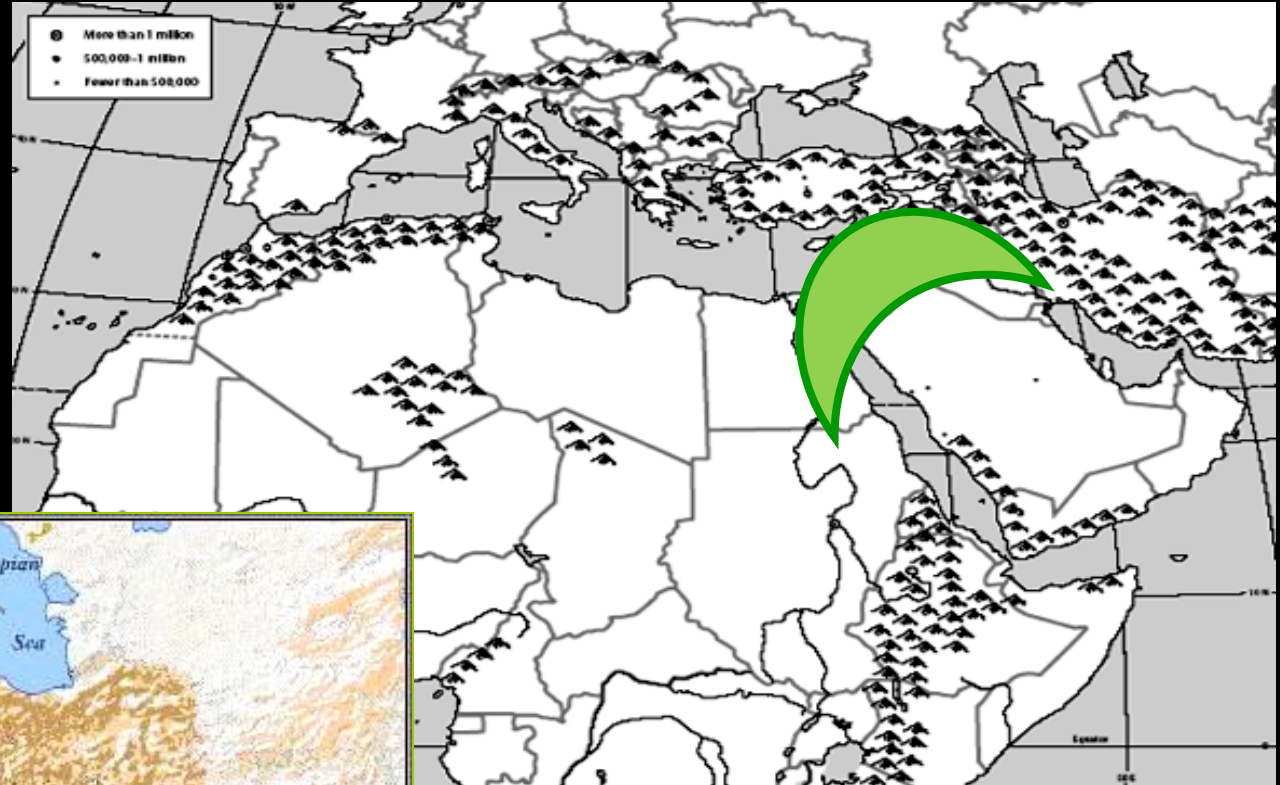
The holy city of Mecca was the birthplace of Mohamed, the founder of Islam. Every year millions of Muslims from around the world go on a hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca.



Regions - Fertile Crescent

The Fertile Crescent stretches from eastern Mediterranean along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers to the Persian Gulf.

Rich soil (land good for growing crops) and abundant water have made it a large population center.



One of the earliest civilizations in the world emerged in the Fertile Crescent. Since the Fertile Crescent has few natural barriers it has been conquered throughout history for its fertile lands and rich cities.

The Fertile Crescent



The land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers is called Mesopotamia.

Melting snow from the surrounding mountains sometimes cause the Tigris and Euphrates to flood, sometimes too much bringing disaster and death, others too little. Dikes and canals have been built to control the flooding.

Dead Sea: Lowest Point on Earth



2,300' below sea level



Many people believe that the mud of the Dead Sea has special healing and cosmetic uses.

The Dead Sea is one of the world's saltiest bodies of water (33%, 8.6 times saltier than the ocean)



Regions – Nile Valley



The Landsat image (left) shows the Nile flowing into its delta. An outline of the continental United States (right) shows the length of the Nile's course. The actual length of the Nile with all its twists and turns is more than 4,100 miles.



The Nile Valley was a cradle of ancient civilization. It has defensive advantages that Mesopotamia did not. Deserts to the east and west protected it from invaders and waterfalls protected invaders from sailing up the Nile. Another difference between the Nile Valley and Mesopotamia is that the flooding is predictable and dependable.

Egypt: The “Gift of the Nile”



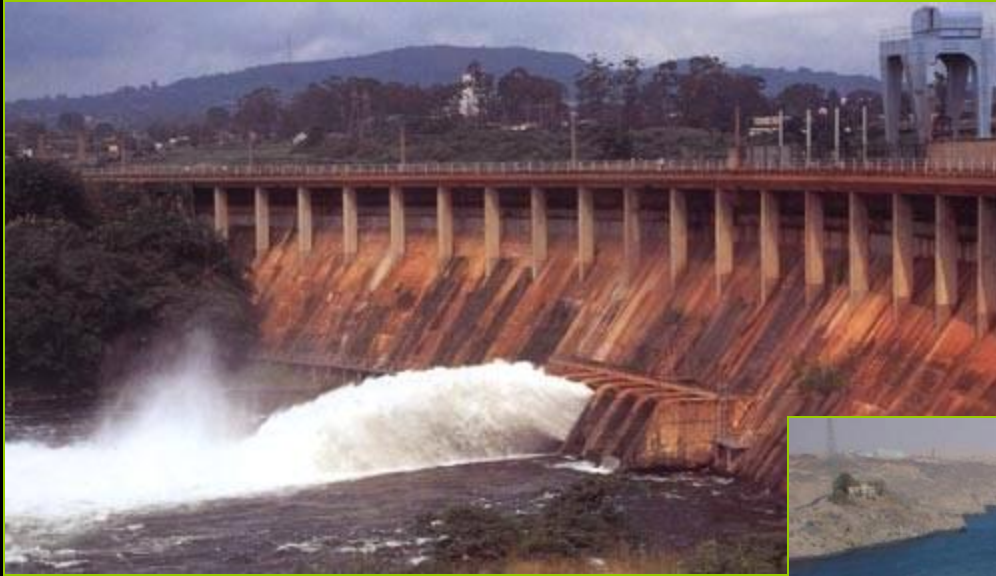
Nile Delta

Annual Nile Flooding

**95% of the Egyptian people live
on 5% of the land!**



Aswan High Dam, Egypt



**Hydroelectric
Power Plant**



Regions - The Maghreb



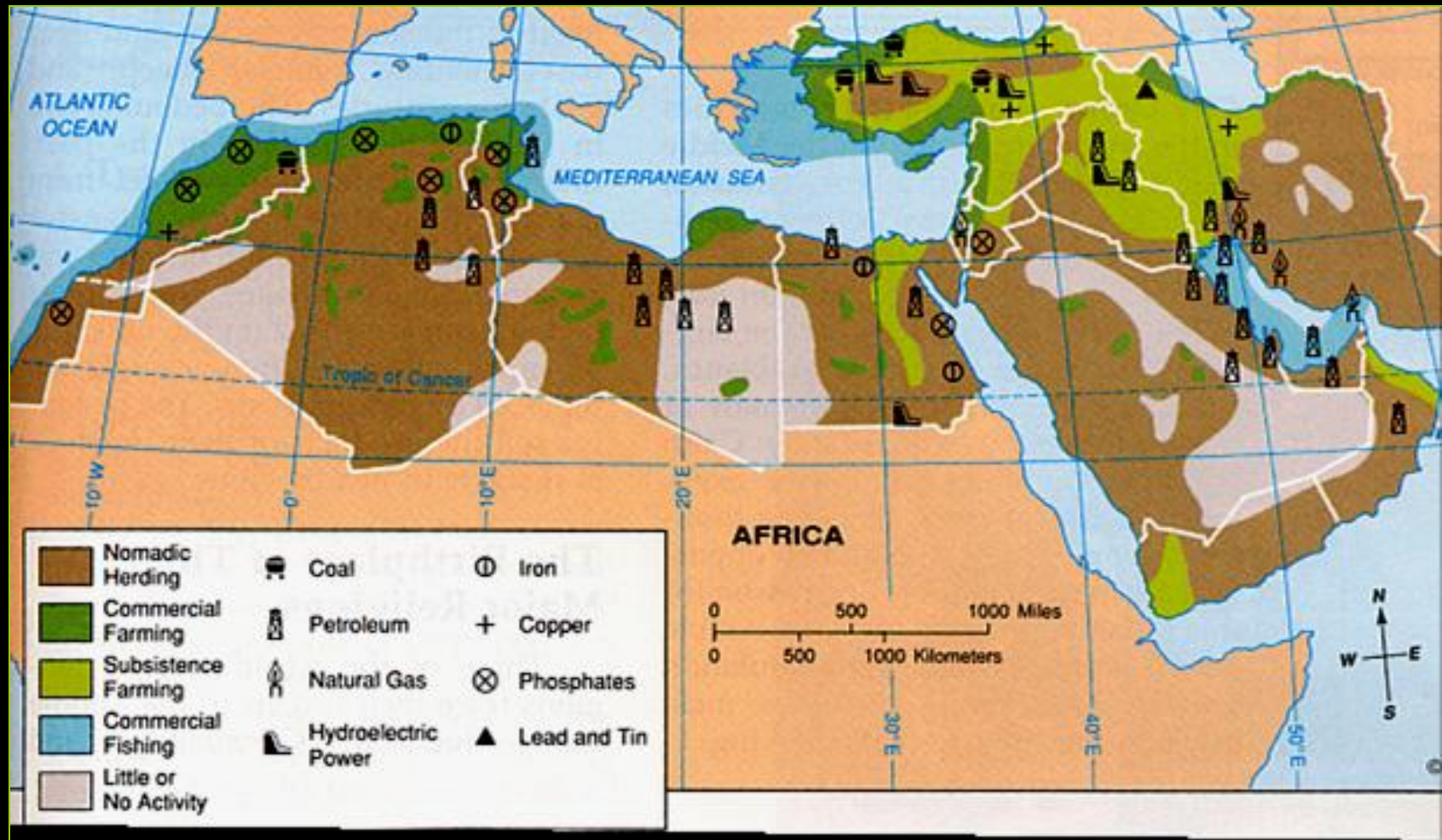
The Maghreb includes the Northern African nations of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. The countries of Libya, Chad Niger, Mali and Mauritania share geographic and cultural links with the Maghreb.

Maghreb is an Arab term meaning Western isle. During 600s and 700s Muslims spread Islam west to the Maghreb. Traders from the Maghreb exchanged goods from West Africa, Europe and the Middle East.



The Maghreb is covered by the Sahara desert and Atlas Mountains. A scarcity of water means that there are very few inhabitants. Most people in the region live along the Mediterranean coast which has fertile soil and plenty of rain.

The Natural Resources of the Middle East



The middle east has a variety of resources including salt, phosphate (used in fertilizers) and copper. The most valuable resource is oil.

World map Showing top 10 Oil Reserves Countries



There are huge amounts of oil beneath the desert on the Arabian peninsula. Because of world oil demand, some countries have grown very wealthy.





Kuwait



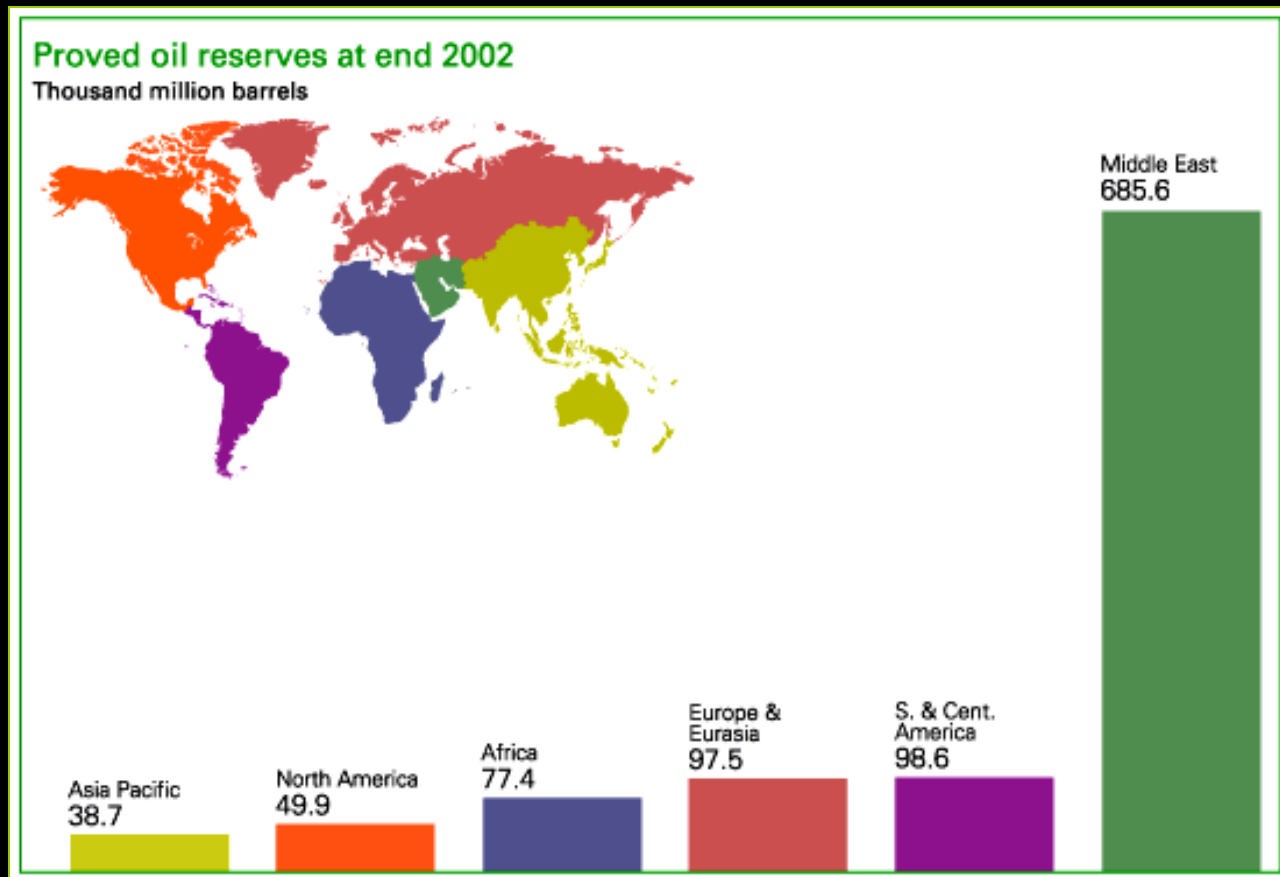
Kuwait City



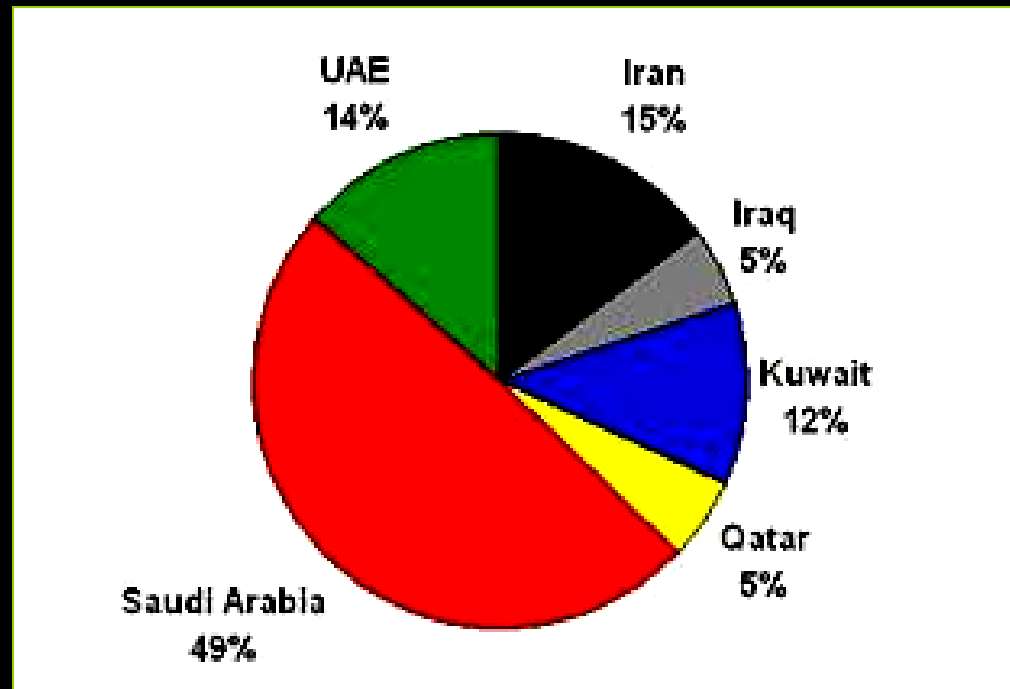
Saudi Oil Fields & Refineries



World Oil Reserves



Persian Gulf Oil Exports (2003)



Completed Map

